THE DICKENSIAN

A Magazine for Dickens Lovers
and Monthly Record of the Dickens Fellowship

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WHEN FOUND—

THE present year marks the seventieth anniversary of the publication of the *Pickwick Papers* in volume form, and to celebrate the event an exhibition devoted exclusively to the book is to be held in London under the auspices of the Dickens Fellowship. The literature which has grown round the book during recent years would in itself make a unique collection. But the Pickwick Exhibition will be devoted to every phase of the subject. An attempt will be made to get together a copy of every edition of the book printed in this country and abroad, all the plagiarisms, continuations, and parodies, and sets of pictures done by the various artists who illustrated them. There will further be relics and curios gathered together from the numerous places of historic interest connected with the Pickwickians, a series of play-bills, pictorial posters in which the characters from the book play an important part, a complete set of topographical views, and specimens of every commercial commodity which bears a Pickwickian name or has been inspired by the immortal book. The Exhibition will be held at the New Dudley Gallery, 169, Piccadilly, W., commencing in July next, and will probably remain open for some weeks. Collectors and readers of *The Dickensian*, who can help to make the Pickwick Exhibition thoroughly representative of the great book by the loan of any item connected with it, would oblige by writing at once to the Hon. Secretary, at 1, Whitcomb House, Whitcomb Street, W.C.

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There is no necessity of advancing proof that to-day the *Pickwick Papers* is the most popular book in the language, and for that reason alone no doubt should exist as to the success of such an exhibition. Although three-score years and ten have elapsed since it began to add to the gaiety of nations, it seems to have more life in it now than even then. It has become an institution, and still offers commentators opportunities for distinguishing themselves. The most recent instance is that of Eatanswill. Hitherto, Ipswich had been accepted as the original scene of the famous election. Now it can safely be asserted that this was wrong, and that Sudbury was the place Dickens described. Since we referred to the subject last month much has been written upon it, the most notable contribution, and the one perhaps that gives the greatest weight in Sudbury's favour—if, indeed, it does not put the question beyond all doubt—being that of Judge Willis, in the *Daily News*. His article not only converted that newspaper, but many persons who had always favoured Ipswich, besides, and has put a very pro-

minent feather in the cap of the latest claimant for Dickensian honour. Our good friends at Sudbury have shown how keen is their zeal by the establishment of a paper which is, of course, called the *Eatanswill Gazette*, and which we deal with on another page. We also publish a letter from a correspondent on the subject.

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We are continually hearing that Dickens founded this and that character in his books on this or that notable person of his day, and although it is true that one or two of his creations were built, so to speak, out of certain characteristics of persons he knew, there are few that had anything like an exact original in real life. To say, however, as many Brighton papers have been saying recently, that Harold Skimpole was "a life study of Charles Lamb" is one of those mysterious pieces of news which it would be difficult to trace the origin of. It would be charitable to put it down as a printer's error had not the statement appeared in four or five newspapers. Dickens was twenty-two years old when Charles Lamb died, so that his "life study" of him began and ended before he actually became an author, if he really made any study at all of the great essayist.

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As a matter of fact, it was Leigh Hunt's peculiarities which Dickens made use of in creating the character of Harold Skimpole, and although Leigh Hunt did not observe that this was so, his many friends did, and remonstrated with Dickens about it. The novelist accordingly toned down the characteristics he had taken from Leigh Hunt, and altered the name from Leonard to Harold Skimpole in order to further differentiate and to save offending his friend. But eventually Leigh Hunt's friends pointed out the similarity between himself and Skimpole, and he took such exception to it that Dickens wrote an apologetic explanation to him.

* * *

Arrangements are being made for an excursion to Rochester, Chatham, Gadshill, and Cobham, to take place on June 8. Full particulars may be obtained from the Hon. Secretary of the Fellowship, at Headquarters. In the meantime, it is suggested that an effort should be made by the various branches to form parties to join the London one, and so make the pilgrimage a thoroughly representative Festival. We understand that Sheffield hope to send between twenty or thirty. All arrangements from London will be made at Headquarters. Country Branches would, of course, make their own to London. It is estimated that the cost of railway, lunch, drive, and tea will be about 8s. 6d. for each person.

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The Dickens Fellowship Dramatic Club is completing arrangements for giving two performances of *The Old Curiosity Shop* at well-known suburban theatres in the West and North of London. Miss Kathleen Marriott will again play Little Nell, and Mrs. Teignmouth Shore the Marchioness, while Mrs. J. T. Grein will impersonate Sally Brass. Mr. Shore and Mr. A. E. Brookes Cross will sustain their old parts of Quilp and Sampson Brass respectively.

THE EDITOR.

IS SUDBURY EATANSWILL?

By J. W. T. LEY

"IS Sudbury Eatanswill?" is a question which has been very much to the fore of late, and it is the most interesting Dickensian question that has cropped up for a long time. The Dickensian in search of Dickens land-marks is a subject for mirth in many quarters, but here we have a question which has been regarded with quite a serious interest, not only by the residents of Sudbury themselves, and their local press, but by the London newspapers, too. For years it has been pretty generally assumed that Ipswich was the original of Eatanswill, but last February Mr. C. Findon Waters, a new-comer to Sudbury, became interested, and was astonished to find that among residents of the town there seemed never to have existed the smallest doubt that the real honour belonged to the birthplace of Gainsborough. He took considerable trouble and collected evidence, which is as strong as any evidence ever can be, short of actual definite proof. What of this evidence?

In the first paragraph of Chapter XIII. of *Pickwick*, Dickens says: "We will frankly acknowledge that up to the period of our being first immersed in the voluminous papers of the Pickwick Club, we had never heard of Eatanswill; we will with equal candour admit that we have in vain searched for proof of the actual existence of such a place at the present day. . . . We are therefore led to believe, that Mr. Pickwick, with that anxious desire to abstain from giving offence to any, and with those delicate feelings for which all who knew him will know he was so eminently remarkable, purposely substituted a fictitious designation for the real name of the place in which his observations were made. We are confirmed in this belief by a little circumstance, apparently slight and trivial in itself, but, when considered in this point of view, not undeserving of notice. *In Mr. Pickwick's note-book we can just trace an entry of the fact, that the places of himself and followers were booked by the Norwich coach;* but this entry was afterwards lined through, as if for the purpose of concealing even the direction in which the borough is situated." In the next sentence Eatanswill is described as a "small town"—a description which certainly fits Sudbury. It is a fact that a coach did in those days run from "The Swan," Lad Lane, London to "The Angel" at Norwich. It will be remembered further, that after spending several days at Eatanswill and attending an "At Home" at "The Den" on the last day, Mr. Pickwick posted by the coach to the Angel at Bury, arriving in time for dinner. Undoubtedly it would have been an easy matter, as Mr. Waters argues, to post from Sudbury to Bury in time for dinner, even after attending a garden-party at the former place. Thus, it seems—to me, at any rate—perfectly fair to assume, on this evidence alone, that Sudbury was the place Dickens had in mind. Certainly no one has answered the question, "Where can a 'small borough' on the road be found where it would be possible to perform the same feat in the time which we are justified in be-

lieving remained after attending the function at 'Eatanswill' and before the time for dinner at Bury?" But it should be noted still further that Mr. Jingle posted over from Bury to attend the gathering at "The Den," and immediately on arrival, discovering Mr. Pickwick among the guests, left the room under the pretence of giving "directions to the postilion," and ordered the men to drive back to Bury, *which he had reached before Mr. Pickwick, who, we have just noted, arrived in time for dinner*. It is pretty certain that there is no other "small borough" which Mr. Jingle could have posted to and returned from in the time. Thus, if it be agreed that it is a reasonable assumption that Dickens had some actual place in mind, then we may surely endorse Judge Wills's judgment that "the case for Sudbury" is a very strong one.

That Sudbury was known to the youthful author of *Pickwick* is shown by the fact that in *Sketches by Boz*, Chapter X., Gabriel Parsons says: "When I was in Suffolk, which is some years ago, business led me to the town of Bury St. Edmund's. I had to stop at the principal places on the way, and therefore, for the sake of convenience, I travelled in a gig. *I left Sudbury one dark night.*" But there is still more convincing evidence that he knew the town: and here we come to the most interesting point of all. In 1834 Dickens was a reporter on the staff of the *Morning Chronicle*. In a letter to a friend in that year he says: "I have just been ordered on a journey, the length of which is at present unknown—don't laugh. I am going (alone) in a gig. I am going into Essex. . . . Chelmsford is my first stage." Now, in this year there was a General Election, and the evidence is conclusive that Dickens journeyed into Norfolk and Suffolk, and reported the Ipswich election at least, while from evidence which has just been gathered, I fancy few will doubt that he also reported that at Sudbury. One critic of this evidence has pointed out that Sudbury returned two members, whilst the election at Eatanswill was for only one seat; but there is nothing in the point, for we are plainly told that the election at Eatanswill was a by-election. And, be it noted, in 1835 there was a by-election at Sudbury.

And now let us glance—it can unfortunately be only a glance—at what I have described as the most interesting point that the discussion has brought out, for which we are indebted to the Editor of the *Essex County Standard*. Dickens was reporting in Suffolk during the General Election of 1835, and it has been assumed that therefore he saw the scenes at Ipswich, and he disguised that town under the name of Eatanswill. The editor of the paper in question has gone to the trouble of turning up the reports of the election in the *Morning Chronicle*, and we find that in the numbers dated January 6 and January 7, 1835, two short paragraphs only appeared in regard to the Ipswich election, and on January 8 the result was announced absolutely without comment, while on January 7 there is a report of the Sudbury election running to very nearly a column! It is true that the report takes note of bribery at Ipswich in the following terms:—"The report in the borough is that there never was, even in the worst times of the old system, such scenes of bribery and undue influence

as has been exhibited on the present occasion," but, as I have said, the whole thing is dismissed in a dozen lines, while Sudbury has nearly a column, a large proportion of which is devoted to a strong condemnation of the corrupt practices of both sides. Here, surely, is strong evidence that the Sudbury election made the stronger impression on the mind of the young journalist.

Of course, space will not permit me to quote the report fully, but a few notable extracts will be read with interest:—"The election at this borough can have little influence in showing the feelings of the people. Principle, with a few exceptions, is unknown among the electors, the far greater proportion of whom are free burgesses of the lowest order, and require feasting and

MARKET HILL, SUDBURY

As it was at the time of the "Eatanswill Election." The house with the chimney on the right of the picture is the one from the roof of which Mrs. Pott and Mr. Jingle viewed the election scene

treating and other weighty considerations to bring them to the poll." Again:—"Open house is kept at all the inns in the town: the voters are seen reeling about the streets in a beastly state of intoxication. Cooping and other manœuvres have been resorted to to procure voters." "Some voters—I believe there were eight—had offered their support to the Blue candidates, Barnes and Stephens. As they were considered doubtful voters, it was thought prudent to send them out of the town, out of reach of the opposite party." And, finally, "Cooping has been resorted to, to a great extent, by both parties. It is calculated that the cost of this election will be £10,000." The state of the poll is then given, and the following sentence immediately follows:—"Forty-three still remained unpolled, of which the Reformers had a decided majority."

It is impossible to quote more extensively, but I fancy readers of the *Dickensian* will see something Pickwickian—Eatanswillian in these extracts. It is worth noting that in this report the mistake is made of calling "The Rose and Crown" "The Crown and Anchor." The "Rose and Crown" was the headquarters of one of the parties in this election. The "Crown and Anchor" was a well-known *Ipswich* hostelry. Is it reasonable to suggest that the reporter had not long before been in Ipswich, and that writing his report hurriedly he made a slip of the pen? I submit that it is. And we *know* that Dickens had reported the Ipswich election. It would be a simple matter to select passages from *Pickwick* which might be placed side by side with those I have quoted from the report, but that must be left to our readers to do for themselves.

One question has been asked which I think must be labelled "extraordinary." "Why did Dickens use a fictitious name for the town?" It is true that Boz seems to have been able to take liberties that would scarcely be allowed to a modern novelist. As an instance we may note Mr. Jingle's remark on arrival at "The Bull," Rochester:—"Wright's next house, dear—very dear—half-a-crown in the bill if you look at the waiter—charge you more if you dine at a friend's than they would if you dined in the coffee-room—rum fellows—very." This, to us, to-day seems very slight, but it must have been pretty serious to "Wright's," and one doubts whether any of our popular living novelists would be allowed the same latitude. Why, then, did Dickens hesitate to describe "Eatanswill" by its proper geographical name? To start with, he would have been directly charging a town with deliberate corruption—a serious charge to be brought in a work of fiction, which probably would not have been tolerated by his publishers; and, in the second place, he had already offended the good people of Sudbury with his reports of the election in the *Morning Chronicle*, for a Liberal of that town wrote to that paper a violent letter of protest, which appeared on January 9, 1835.

In the last number of the *Dickensian* it was noted that an Eatanswill Club had been started at Sudbury. But now history is repeating itself with a vengeance, for a few days ago I received the first copy of *The Eatanswill Gazette*, which will be issued at irregular intervals as the official organ of the club. I should like to "notice" the paper at length, but that is denied me now. That it promises worthily to uphold the Pott tradition is shown by the following extract from the "Editor's forewords":—"Our contemporaries may well writhe and squirm and fume and fret. We shall, without fear or favour, voice the feelings and sentiments of those illustrious persons who form the Eatanswill Club. Our reptile contemporaries may swelter forth their black venom, and grow a lurid green with envy at the success which *must* attend our efforts, but we shall calmly pursue the tenor of our way, shedding the lustre of our knowledge and wit upon the world."

I cannot resist one more word. In Chapter X. of *Pickwick* we read, "If the Buffs proposed to new skylight the market-place,

the Blues got up public meetings and denounced the proceedings; if the Blues proposed the erection of an additional pump in the High Street, the Buffs rose as one man and stood aghast at the enormity." It is a fact that in 1835 Sudbury had a sky-lighted market-place; and that it had a High Street, while the High Street at Ipswich is not only an unimportant thoroughfare, but, I believe, has been built since the time of Dickens. As to the "additional pump in the High Street," the copy of the *Eatanswill Gazette*, which is before me now, states that on March 22, 1834, a meeting of the Town Council was held, at which the Mayor urged the necessity of fixing a new arm to the Town Pump. Did "the Buffs rise as one man"? Well, Mr. Jackson rose, and said: "Mr. Mayor, Aldermen, and, I wish I could add gentlemen, I am most anxious not to give offence to any one here present while moving this motion, and if I do use any harsh names, if I do

THE "ROSE AND CROWN," SUDBURY
"The Town Arms" of "Eatanswill," and the Headquarters of the Blues

insinuate that certain persons here are scoundrels of the deepest dye, if I do describe them as plunderers and wastrels" (that has a familiar ring!), "it is not because I have any personal animus against them. . . . I protest against this wicked innovation. . . . I have paid a visit with several colleagues to the Pump, and I find that there is still several inches of the handle protruding. With the aid of a pair of pincers it is just possible to work the Pump, and I say that this proposal is a disgraceful, dastardly and abominable orgie of extravagance." This, of course, is a piece of excellent fooling on the part of the Editor, but it shows how thoroughly he is fitted for his post, and how well he has caught the spirit of the original.

CHARLES DICKENS AND JOHN BULL

By J. CUMING WALTERS

AUTHOR OF "CLUES TO THE MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD"

I

WHEN we read the works of Charles Dickens for entertainment, solace, delight, or instruction, yielding ourselves to his spell as to an enchanter who, by the magic of words more potent than any wizard's wand could conjure up visions and command laughter and tears—when we read these works do we always render complete justice to our beloved author by realizing his full purpose? Possibly, whilst we are so much under his sway, we overlook some of his higher teachings. Dickens, who enchains our interest, was preceptor and guide, bidding us search our hearts and consciences, showing us evils to combat, setting before us ideals. In his literary campaigns he became one of the severest censors of the wrongs and abuses of his times, and one of the foremost advocates of remedy and reform. His ridicule was sharp as the lash of Juvenal, and he poured unceasing scorn on injustice, tyranny, hypocrisy, and neglect whether in private dealing or in public departments. The harsh Poor Laws, the Circumlocution Office, Bumbledom, obstinate and short-sighted Podsnappery which deems everything wrong but itself—all these he warred against with vigour which knew no abatement, valour which knew no fear. He was a warrior and iconoclast. He was patriot, too; a patriot in highest degree, because he did not shrink from baring the faults of the land which he loved so well that he would have purged it from error and strengthened it in rectitude.

It is in his Preface to *Martin Chuzzlewit* that we get an explanation of his motive and a clue to his dealings with that complex character whom we know under the generic title of "John Bull." Explaining his criticism of the faults which he detected in the American system, he said that he hoped the good-humoured people of the United States would not quarrel with him for his strictures, inasmuch as he had "never, in writing fiction, had any disposition to soften what was ridiculous at home." And, indeed, John Bull at home had—and still has—many features which excite the sharp strokes of the satirist, and call for the solemn admonition of those who would see him better, worthier, and wiser.

Let us take a glance, in history's mirror, at the traditional figure, who, as Dr. Arbuthnot first described him, was an honest, sturdy, obstinate old fellow, very well satisfied with himself, very confident of his own powers, a little intolerant of other people, tenaciously holding to the customs of his forefathers, and very reluctant to learn anything new. Such a person, when on his best behaviour and in his most amiable mood, would be estimable in spite of his faults and crotchets; but take him at extremes and there would be very little to say in his favour. His obstinacy would then become fatuous, his peppery temper would be violent, his intolerance would make him fanatical, and his love of old fashions would make him absurdly retrograde. It was this John

Bull in his worst, but not unfamiliar, aspect whom Dickens held up to ridicule and desired to amend. He disliked his insular prejudice and arrogance. He disliked his overbearing habits, his petty tyranny, his class distinctions, his pretentious superiority. He disliked his official ineptitude, his departmental evasions, his slowness of action, and his obtuseness of vision. He disliked the hereditary legislator with "a family as old as the hills but infinitely more respectable," with a pedigree 600 years old and a head 600 years thick." He disliked the youthful progeny when "prigs," and he disliked the body of rulers who ruled oppressively in their various parishes and divided the human race into two parts, the Bigwigs, who ought to enjoy every privilege, and the Nobodies, who should be deprived of all. We trace to this dislike his portrayal of the Gradgrinds, the Bounderbys, Lord Boodle, Sir Leicester Dedlock, the Guardians of Bumbledom, Alderman Cute, the Tite Barnacles, Sapsea, and Mr. Podsnap.

Against these he set the better type of the Briton, with his force of character; the true English gentleman with his fine impulses, his goodness of heart, his chivalry and devotion, and with all his little surface-faults redeemed by noble qualities beneath—John Jardine, the Cheeryble Brothers, Jarvis Lorry, Old Wardle, Mr. Meagles, John Westlock, Mr. Boffin, and Old Humphrey. To these we may add the real English gentlemen of humble life—for who rises to greater heights than unselfish Joe Gargery, or Peggotty, or Stephen Blackpool, or even poor Toodles, the engine-driver, who could teach the proud and stiff-necked Dombey a lesson in delicacy and humanity?

Nor must Mrs. John Bull be overlooked. As the "ministering angel" Dickens paid her his full tribute. But he disliked her also in her more perturbing, vexatious, and rampagious moods—she must not be a short-sighted Mrs. Jellaby, an interfering Mrs. Pardiggle, an overbearing Mrs. Markleham, a fretful Mrs. Varden, an unreasonable Mrs. Wilfer, or a vixenish, virulent Mrs. Snagsby, who was "too violently compressed about the waist, and with a nose like a sharp autumn evening, inclining to be frosty towards the end"—a housewife and helpmeet who "managed the money, reproached the tax-gatherers, appointed the time and place of devotion on Sundays, and acknowledged no responsibility as to the dinner."

None of these types are contrary to nature. They exist, and they are quite representative of John Bull and his womankind. They are national specimens, and there is little doubt that Dickens had a distinct purpose in giving us their realistic portraits and in enabling them to see their own reflections as in a glass, and not darkly. In performing a disagreeable duty Dickens was animated by a true patriotism, and, loving his country and his countrymen, ardent for their well being and jealous of their good name, he aimed at bringing about a racial improvement and producing a higher type of the British citizen whether in the home, or in public life, or in international relationship. His son has told us that his father never learned politics, and that to him they were "an instinct

rather than a science." When he was asked to enter the House of Commons he said, as so few men dare to say, that if he was to accomplish reform he could do more good outside. He knew our talking-house but too well. He knew John Bull's habit of allowing the stimulus from outside to evaporate in words when he got inside. The honourable member for Verbosity was a familiar vision, and became a proper target for his scorn. Do any of us recognize the honourable member for Verbosity now, that eloquent master of unmeaning sentences who enraptures his audience by exclaiming with a fervour rising to passionate declamation that "his principles are written in the countenance of the lion and the unicorn, are stamped upon the royal shield those animals support, and upon the free words of fire which that shield bore?" "His principles are Britannia and her sea-trident. His principles are commercial prosperity co-existently with perfect and profound agricultural contentment. His principles are the addition of his colours nailed to the mast, every man's heart in the right place, every man's eye open, every man's hand ready; or, in a word, Hearths and Altars, Labour and Capital, Crown and Sceptre, Elephant and Castle." And when an audacious objector begged to know what the honourable member was driving at, the honourable member triumphantly replied, and settled his principles once and for all, by declaring that he was driving at "the illimitable perspective."

The honourable member for Verbosity was equally felicitous in his votes. He was a man of that profundity in vote-giving, said Dickens, that you never knew what he meant. When he seemed to be voting pure white, it was just as likely he was voting jet black; and when he said Yes, those who disagreed with him might take it for granted that he meant No. That was his statesmanship. If you objected to it, he at once floored you by demanding to know if you were prepared to destroy the sacred bulwarks of our nationality?

As a humble student of politics myself, I am inclined to believe that the borough of Verbosity has not yet been disfranchised, and that its eminent representative is still greatly in evidence and his services much in request during a General Election campaign. In all likelihood he prepares some of the answers to questions in the House of Commons; in time of war he acts as military adviser; in time of peace deals with miscarriages of justice in the Home Department; and is so admired by John Bull that he is always safe for a peerage.

Another sketch of Dickens's, not often read, gives us his idea of England's enslavement to unrelaxing systems to laws true in the letter and false in spirit. It is called "Prince Bull," tyrannised over by a dreadful godmother who could "stop the fastest thing in the world, change the strongest into the weakest, and the most useful into the most useless." Her name was Tape. When the Prince went to war, and spent his money freely, Tape caused mismanagement on the part of the officials, and everything went wrong; provisions did not reach the army, the sick

were left untended, and, thanks to Tape, the noble army of Prince Bull perished. When an inquiry was ordered, Tape spoilt it. When reforms were suggested, Tape prevented them. And though Prince Bull suffered extremely, Tape remained triumphant to the last. This all sounds so modern that it ought to be added that Dickens wrote the sketch forty years ago. But Tape is immortal, and history has a habit of repeating itself. Tape is one of John Bull's precious possessions. She is the presiding genius of his patent indestructible Circumlocution Office. "The most important department under Government" was Dickens's description of this gigantic sham. "No public business of any kind could possibly be done at any time without the acquiescence of the Circumlocution Office. Its finger was in the largest public pie, and in the smallest public tart. . . . Whatever was required to be done the Circumlocution Office was beforehand with all the public departments in the art of perceiving—how Not to Do it. . . ." "Mechanicians, natural philosophers, soldiers, sailors, petitioners, memorialists, people with grievances, people who wanted to prevent grievances, people who wanted to redress grievances, jobbing people, jobbed people, people who couldn't get rewarded for merit, and people who couldn't get punished for demerit"—do they not still haunt Downing Street and Pall Mall?

(To be continued.)

POETICAL TRIBUTES TO CHARLES DICKENS

XXIX

ABIDETH now in memory our friend,
Whose powerful teachings seem to have no end;
Immortal treasures are they, wealth untold,
Pure and unsullied as the finest gold.
His works have all a tendency for good,
From *Boz* and *Pickwick* down to *Edwin Drood*,
Endeavouring hard to slay some great abuse,
Each had a purpose and a noble use.
Whenever he had words to write or say,
They were, and are, the language of to-day,
To fit, to suit, to illustrate, to deal,
To mend, to soothe, to fashion, and to heal.
What tales of travel, both on sea and land!
What famous fun, what pathos, rich and grand!
What graphic pictures! What soul-stirring themes!
What living memories! What pleasant dreams!
What life-like rendering of the fierce and wild!
What touching stories of the darling child!
What photographs of life in every stage!
For every people, and for every age!
As to the readers in the future days,
We dare aver they all will speak his praise,
And well-deserved inscription quote again:
"His life and labours were not spent in vain."

G. B. A.

BOZ AND HIS PUBLISHERS

By PERCY FITZGERALD, M.A., F.S.A.

IV

FROM RICHARD BENTLEY TO CHAPMAN AND HALL

CHAPTER II

WE may always wonder how Chapman & Hall allowed their brilliant writer to slip from their hands, even temporarily, into those of Bentley. The fact was that they were not then wholly confident in the success of *Pickwick*, while Bentley, who had great sagacity in such matters, was already able to forecast his fame, and secured him without opposition from them. But so soon as he had begun to dispute or quarrel with Bentley, they had become conscious of their mistake, and were eager to draw him back, and the offer of the *Sketches* gave them a tempting opportunity. And they certainly intervened in a very generous and sporting way. The young fellow must have been touched at their thus coming forward with over £2,000 to rescue for him and themselves a rather trivial book, whose success had been practically exhausted. But by this advance he became their debtor and mortgaged to them, as it were.

Not until March 31, 1840, was a formal agreement drawn up between Dickens and his publishers, by which, as Mr. Robson tells us, the respective shares in the copyright of the *Sketches* was settled. This is engrossed on two sheets of parchment, "with fine signatures and seals of Edward Chapman and W. Hall."

Chapman & Hall! For all literary folk those names have a sort of melodious sound. We think of them with interest because so inseparable from "Boz." *Pickwick* does not look the same with other names on the title-page. We like to see them just below the image of Mr. P., seated in his punt; we even like the names of their provincial agents—"Edinburgh: John Menzies": "Dublin: James Maglashan." It was the fitting thing that all through, off and on perhaps, his and their fortunes should be bound up together. Chapman & Hall without "Boz" would not be as they are; "Boz" without Chapman & Hall would not, perhaps, be as he is now. With them he began; with them ended. He is gone; they are left.

The story of their grand *coup*—his engagement to supply a descriptive commentary for a number of humorous or caricature sketches by Seymour—has been told and re-told. All know how this venture turned into the immortal "Pickwick." It was flattering for the young man that he had not to go round knocking at publishers' doors, and begging for a hearing, as was to be Thackeray's fate with *Vanity Fair*. Every one came to *him*, not he to them. This was a note of character.

It was wonderful how the young author, thus overburdened with great and important works, could contrive to expend himself in a number of airy trifles, which he seemed to throw off without effort. Such were the "Sunday under Three Heads"—the little works on "Young Gentlemen," and "Young Couples," with an opera and

farces, the tales in the " Library of Fiction " which were regularly published. These were airy nothings. The Firm, just established by two " pushful " young men, were issuing pretty little volumes marked by very tasteful treatment, both in print and illustrations, notable amongst which was *The Squib Annual*, a dainty little production, with Seymour's pictures, and containing also a curious anticipation of Mr. Pickwick's figure.

FREDERIC CHAPMAN

Publishers may well envy the unique distinction which associated Chapman & Hall with *Pickwick*—the publishers of *Pickwick* now (1907) and then (1836-7)! It was a wonderful chance that led them to Furnival's Inn—now levelled. By their simple undertaking they really created a perfect literature—a vast library —a stream of commentary that has gone on tumbling its way along in a torrent from that day to this. I knew Chapman *circa* 1858. I doubt if there be half-a-dozen now alive who recall " Little Hall."

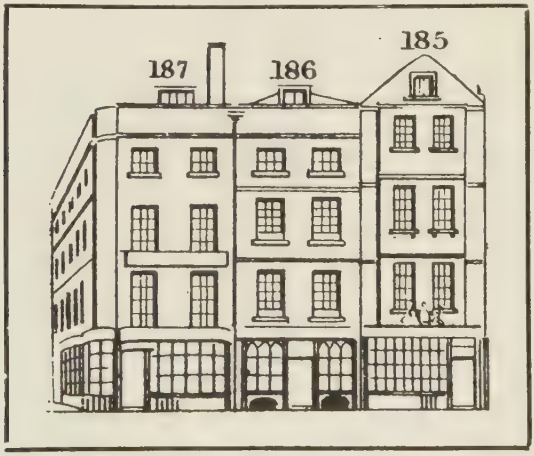
I knew very well Frederic Chapman, who joined the firm in 1841, and became later the head of it. An excellent fellow he was, somewhat blunt and bluff, but straightforward and good-natured. On his shoulders, even when Edward Chapman was alive, lay the burden. He was a tall, burly, rubicund man, and had good business instinct. He had a small but delightful house in Ovington Square, to which some one had added a billiard-room, which he turned into a charming dining-room. What tasty Lucullus-like dinners were given there! I cannot say how he managed the firm, but when Dickens was alive he tried to meet his wishes in every conceivable way. Forster, too, he looked up to almost reverentially. The firm was made into a limited company in 1880. F. Chapman died in 1895. The managing director of the firm to-day is Mr. Arthur Waugh, the critic and biographer, who is carrying on the traditions of bygone days, with Dickens as the firm's basis of prosperity, and it is no secret, I believe, that the Editor of this magazine is an enthusiastic member of it.

In March, 1847, died William Hall, and "Boz" and Forster attended his funeral at Highgate. In one of his letters "Boz" speaks tenderly of the loss of "poor Hall." As we have seen, there was a curious connection between "Boz" and this worthy man.

I recall my first visit to the firm in Piccadilly. John Forster was with me, who strode in all important, "as though the whole place belonged to him." I was struck with the general stately look—the bustle—the number of clerks hurrying about. Forster was received with infinite respect, for he dictated all things. The partners were sent for; and I saw and was introduced to Hall, I think. Young Frederic—as he was then—was waiting on the great Forster.

But, alas! this early and renewed connection with Chapman & Hall was to be at first inauspicious enough. Their joint venture of *Martin Chuzzlewit* proved comparatively unsuccessful, its circulation falling one-half, and the publishers grew alarmed. They were to have been repaid their advances in the Bentley transaction out of the profits, but, these falling short, they spoke of appropriating £50 a month out of the author's regular allowance. This was in June, 1843, and he was so offended that he began to think of making proposals to another firm. "Mr. Hall should have a piece of my mind," he wrote. Bradbury & Evans were then his printers, and they received his offer with some surprise; but they were not very confident in their prospect, which was, indeed, to start as publishers for the first time. But, owing to Forster's sagacious advice, "Boz" patched up his quarrel with his publishers, on the grounds that they were about to publish for him, on commission, *A Christmas Carol*, and the quarrel would not be exactly a stimulant to their exertions. Unfortunately, as it turned out, when the latter book appeared to be enjoying enormous success, and he was expecting a clear £1,000 profit, he only received, in February, one-half. This disappointment, with "terrific unpaid bills," reduced him to misery and despair, and it determined him

to finally break with them. This slight but elegant little trifle seems to have cost an enormous sum, *viz.*, over £1,500, to produce. It is easy to see that they were scared by symptoms of failing popularity—by the prophecy in one of the reviews that, "having gone up like a rocket, he would come down like the stick, etc." They were naturally alarmed as to the monies lent—"invested in him"—which was part of the price for his labour. On his side, "Boz" had rashly embarked some thousands in his longing to get free of what was galling him. Thus had he bound himself in two serious obligations. Later, when he broke with Bradbury & Evans, it cost him the useless purchase of *Household Words*, which he destroyed so soon as it was purchased. These are costly taxes on the indulgence of one's feelings. But "Boz" could not rest under any menace of trouble. He must mend or end it, on the spot and



WHERE THE "PICKWICK PAPERS" WAS PUBLISHED

Chapman & Hall's Premises at 186, Strand. Reproduced from "Tallis's Street Views," 1838

on the moment, at whatever cost. It turned out, after all, later, that the profits of the *Carol* had not come in, and that they reached very near the amount he had expected. Notwithstanding, he and Chapman & Hall parted company. But he soon came back again, and remained with them to the end, and shortly after his death, in 1870, the firm bought the copyright of all his books. Their names now seem part and parcel of Dickens's, and, in spite of the many reprints of each book as it falls out of copyright, the public seem to prefer those editions of his old firm, as last year's recorded sales indicate. It would take too much space to even enumerate the various editions of his complete works published by the firm. But there is scarcely a year passes that does not see some new venture on their part, and it speaks well of their enterprise that at the present time they are issuing the most sumptuous edition yet published, and also the cheapest edition one could desire.

DICKENS AND BIRMINGHAM

By HORACE E. MOORE

I

IN all probability it would be impossible now to say when Dickens first visited Birmingham. The late Mr. Kitton goes nearest the mark when he says "in all probability Dickens knew Birmingham in his journalistic days." Certain it is that he passed through the town in November, 1838, on his way to Bangor, *viâ* Wolverhampton. However it may be, there can be no doubt that the great novelist had a genuine admiration for the town and its people, and although the former occupies no prominent position in any of his works, yet it forms an important feature in connection with his life, for it was at Birmingham, in aid of the Birmingham and Midland Institute, that he gave his first public reading.

No doubt the impression the town made upon his mind at first is more or less faithfully recorded in the fiftieth chapter of the *Pickwick Papers*. The immortal Pickwickians, having dined at the "Hop Pole," Tewkesbury, continue their journey towards Birmingham under the combined influence of "bottled ale, Madeira and port," Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Ben Allen eventually falling asleep whilst Bob and Mr. Weller sang duets in the dickey. "It was quite dark when Mr. Pickwick roused himself sufficiently to look out of the window. The straggling cottages by the roadside, the dingy hue of every object visible, the murky atmosphere, the paths of cinders and brickdust, the deep red glow of furnace fires in the distance, the volumes of dense smoke issuing heavily forth from high toppling chimneys, blackening and obscuring everything around; the glare of distant lights, the ponderous wagons which toiled along the road, laden with clanking rods of iron, or piled with heavy goods—all bespokened their rapid approach to the great working town of Birmingham. As they rattled through the narrow thoroughfares leading to the heart of the turmoil, the sights and sounds of earnest occupation struck more forcibly on the senses. The streets were thronged with working people. The hum of labour resounded from every house, lights gleamed from the long casement windows in the attic stories, and the whirl of wheels and noise of machinery shook the trembling walls. The fires, whose lurid sullen lights had been visible for miles, blazed fiercely up in the great works and factories of the town. The din of hammers, the rushing of steam, and the dead heavy clanking of engines was the harsh music which arose from every quarter." The post-boy drives briskly through the open streets, and past the "handsome and well-lighted shops" on the outskirts of the town, and eventually sets his distinguished travellers down at the "Old Royal Hotel," Temple Row. Having been duly installed in comfortable apartments, Mr. Pickwick inquires of the waiter the whereabouts of Mr. Winkle's house. "Close by, sir," says the waiter, "not above five hundred yards, sir. Mr. Winkle is a wharfinger, sir, at the canal, sir. Private residence is not—oh dear no—*not* five hundred yards, sir." With

this information Mr. Pickwick and his friends set out to call upon Mr. Winkle, senior, upon that "delicate mission" without delay. "About a quarter of a mile off," so continues the chapter, "in a quiet, substantial-looking street, stood an old red-brick house with three steps before the door, and a brass-plate upon it, bearing, in fat Roman capitals, the words 'Mr. Winkle.' The steps were very white, and the bricks were very red and the house was very clean." Such is the description given in the *Pickwick Papers* of Birmingham and of Mr. Winkle's house situate at the corner of Easy Row and Edmund Street.

Not far from here is another scene of Birmingham to be found

MR. WINKLE'S HOUSE

in the forty-third chapter of the *Old Curiosity Shop*. It will be remembered that Little Nell and her grandfather, in their flight from Quilp, disembark from the canal boat at a bridge just before the boatmen arrive at their destination, and after crossing a busy thoroughfare and passing down a winding lane, pursue their journey into the Black Country. The bridge here mentioned in all probability would be in Gas Street, the "busy thoroughfare" which they would cross, of course, would be Broad Street, and the lane which they journeyed down no doubt would be St. Martin's Lane, leading down on to the Sand-pits, and thence on to the Dudley Road.

On the eve of the publication of *Master Humphrey's Clock*, Dickens visited the "Metropolis of the Midlands." Accompanied by his wife and Maclise, he left London on the 3rd April, 1840, and arrived in Birmingham on the following day. Here he was joined by his younger brother Alfred (then an agricultural student at Tamworth) and Forster, who had travelled from Bath. Forster, on arrival, announced the welcome news that the whole of the first impression of *Master Humphrey's Clock* had been sold, and orders for a further ten thousand copies already placed.

Two societies existing in Birmingham in the "'forties" for the intellectual recreation and improvement of the working-classes—the Mechanics' Institute and the Athenæum Society—having failed through mismanagement and lack of funds (the former after a most useful existence extending over twenty years), a public meeting was held on the 1st March, 1843, which resulted in the foundation of the Polytechnic Institution. For the purpose of raising the necessary funds in connection with this institution, a conversazione was arranged and took place at the Town Hall on the 28th February, 1844, at which Dickens presided. He was well supported by a large number of the influential resident gentry of the town and neighbourhood, and the hall was tastefully decorated for the occasion. Two large transparencies were placed in the orchestra, with banners suspended at the sides, the fronts of the side galleries were ornamented with festoons of evergreens and roses, and the pillars and chandeliers were surmounted by laurels. A platform was erected for the speakers immediately under, and extended a short distance beyond the orchestra, over which the word "Polytechnic" was inscribed in flowers, whilst the front of the great gallery bore the inscription, "Welcome, Boz." The hall was filled to overflowing, Dickens giving a most characteristic speech in support of the broad principles upon which the Polytechnic was to be conducted.

Shakespeare's house having been purchased for the nation in September, 1847, it was necessary to provide a fund for the endowment of a perpetual curatorship for the same. The efforts in this direction brought about that "splendid strolling" by the famous company of amateur actors organized by Dickens. They appeared in Birmingham on the 6th June, 1848, at the Theatre Royal, New Street, in Ben Jonson's comedy, "Every Man in His Humour," Dickens taking the *rôle* of Captain Bobadil. The performance concluded with Mrs. Inchbald's farce, "Animal Magnetism," in which Dickens appeared as the Doctor. There was a capital attendance, the gross receipts amounting to £327. Three weeks afterwards (on the 27th June) the illustrious company gave a second performance for the same object, and at the same theatre, "The Merry Wives of Windsor," with Dickens as Justice Shallow, being given on this occasion. The interlude was "Love, Law and Physic," followed by "A Good Night's Rest, or Two o'Clock in the Morning." There was a crowded house on this night also, the total receipts amounting to £262.

(*To be continued.*)

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

THE ORIGINAL OF EATANSWILL

SIR,—Considering the minute attention given to the claims of various places to be the originals of those (*e.g.* the "Blue Dragon," of *Martin Chuzzlewit*) associated with Dickensian topography, it is rather surprising that the claim of Ipswich to be the original of Eatanswill has been so long and so generally accepted on the rather slender ground that, just prior to writing *Pickwick*, Dickens reported for the *Suffolk Chronicle* (now merged in the *Suffolk Times and Mercury*) an election at the birthplace of Cardinal Wolsey. The fact that Ipswich figures under its own name in *Pickwick* should have warned every one—and I include myself in the condemnation—against assuming its identity with Eatanswill, for surely it is unknown for an author to refer to a town in the same book both by its own name and a pseudonym.

Sudbury, however, is not the only claimant for the honour—if such it be—of being the original of Eatanswill. In the *Leeds and Yorkshire Mercury* of January 16, 1904, the Rev. Alexander Donovan, Vicar of Garton, near Hull (who has been rendered famous by a reference to him in one of Lord Rosebery's speeches on the Education Question), wrote setting forth the claims of Norwich, *viz.*: that the coach by which Mr. Pickwick and his companions travelled is referred to as both the Eatanswill coach and the Norwich coach (but it does not seem to have occurred to Mr. Donovan that this would fit in equally well with the coach being one for Norwich *viâ* Eatanswill); that passengers from London to Ipswich would not go *viâ* Norwich; that Eatanswill was reached late in the evening, which would fit in better with Norwich (100 miles from London) than with Ipswich (70 miles distant); and that he had read that Mrs. Leo Hunter was a resident near the Norfolk capital some seventy years ago.

Careful examination of the text of *Pickwick* would seem to show, however, that Norwich hardly meets the case. Eatanswill is described as a small town, whereas Norwich, at the census (1831) prior to the writing of *Pickwick*, had a population of 61,000, and was ninth on the list of English provincial towns; furthermore, Eatanswill was not many miles from Bury St. Edmunds, but Norwich is, I believe, thirty-five. Moreover, Norwich is 115 miles from London, and could, therefore, hardly be reached the same day. Ipswich, while a lesser town than Norwich, would hardly go under the designation of small, especially remembering that, in the pre-Victorian days, many a town of a size which would be considered small nowadays was thought large. Again, Ipswich, while about ten miles nearer Bury than Norwich, can hardly be described as not many miles away from the town of the East Anglian Royal martyr, bearing in mind that distances were much more formidable in coaching than in railway days.

Now for the claims of Sudbury. It is, undoubtedly, a small town, and nearer to Bury than either Norwich or Ipswich, being, apparently, only fifteen miles off, while it would seem to answer to the other characteristics of Eatanswill as set forth by Dickens. It is true that the arrival late in the evening is rather a difficulty, it being only sixty-eight miles or so from London, which was left in the morning. But we are not told what hour in the morning; it might have been late, in which case delays for meals and changing of horses, to say nothing of the possibilities of bad cattle and a bad driver—the Eatanswill coach was not tooled by Mr. Weller, Senior—would account for the length of the journey.

Yours, &c.,

FREDK. G. JACKSON.

8 PARK LANE, LEEDS, *Mar.* 27, 1907.

A DICKENS BAZAAR AT ROCHESTER

A "Dickens" Bazaar will be held in the Corn Exchange, Rochester, on May 29 and 30, in aid of the funds for carrying out some alterations to St. Mary's Schools, Strood. The Bazaar, which will be opened on one day by the Mayor of Rochester, and on the other by the Bishop, is receiving a large amount of support from members of the Fellowship. Special features will be signboards for the stalls on which scenes from the Master's novels are being painted by local artists, performances of "Bardell *v.* Pickwick," and a loan collection of manuscripts, portraits, and other relics of the great novelist. Offers of relics, &c., for exhibition will be gratefully received by the Hon. Secretary, Mr. W. H. Noyce, St. Mary's School, Strood, who will take every possible care to ensure their safe return to their owners.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

"I didn't know, and now I do know, and that shows the advantage of asking, don't it?"—ROSA DARTLE.

QUESTIONS

DORA SPENLOW'S HOUSE AT NORWOOD.—If the correspondent who recently wrote to the Hon. General Secretary of the Fellowship on this subject will communicate with me, at Whitcomb House, I shall be pleased to do what I can to assist him in the identification.

T. W. TYRRELL,
Hon. Sec., *The Dickensian.*

THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP

HERE, THERE, AND EVERYWHERE

NEEDLEWORK AND CHARITABLE GUILD.—Upwards of 150 old folks were entertained by the Guild to a substantial meat tea on April 13 in the Parish Hall, Vartry Road, Stamford Hill. It was the third time that the district had been chosen by the Guild, and many old faces were to be seen amongst the company. After every one had been well satisfied, the remainder of the joints, cake, and other good things provided were divided up and distributed amongst them in paper bags, and taken away. After tea an entertainment of "infinite variety" was provided for them, to which another 150 of their friends and neighbours were invited. The programme comprised songs (humorous and otherwise), contributed by Miss Amy Gwynnett and Messrs. Howard Rose, Percy Merriman, Herbert Palmer, and B. W. Matz; recitations by Miss Edith Sayers and Messrs. Howard Rose, J. W. T. Ley, and T. Wigg; Miss Kathleen Marriott gave a club display and danced a sailor's hornpipe; Miss Amy Gwynnett and Mr. Percy Merriman brought the evening's amusement to a close with a delightful performance of a very humorous duologue entitled "A Pair of Lunatics." Everybody enjoyed themselves to their heart's content, including those members of the Fellowship who waited on the old folks and helped to amuse them. All the

arrangements were in the capable hands of Miss Miniken, the Hon. Secretary of the Guild, and she is to be heartily commended for the perfect way they were carried out.

BIRMINGHAM.—On March 22, in the Great Western Hotel, was held a social gathering to conclude the session. A musical programme was provided by friends, and a series of dramatic character sketches were given by Mr. C. H. Farnell and Miss Edith Manders, including Old Martin Chuzzlewit, Mercy Pecksniff, Jonas Chuzzlewit, Oliver Twist, and Fagin, which were very much enjoyed, as the representations were excellent. The evening concluded with a short carpet dance.

BRIGHTON.—Under the presidency of Mr. Henry Davey, the members met at Steine House on March 23rd, when Mr. W. Adams delivered a lecture on *Bleak House*. Mr. Adams dealt with the peculiarities and characteristics of the novel, its extreme length, and criticized strongly the way in which Dickens dragged in the case of the destruction of old Brook by spontaneous combustion. The homely and hospitable character of Guardian Jarndyce appealed very strongly to the speaker as an excellent and beautiful character. Guppy's final proposal to Esther Summerson was, to the lecturer's mind, very overdrawn. *Bleak House* could well be treated as two stories without very much affecting the two respective plots, or even confusing the two sets of characters centring round the respective plots. Mr. Adams dealt in the next place with the story of the great suit, showing its progress, its effects, and its farcical termination. Mr. Adams took care to enforce the moral of the caricature of philanthropy, district visiting, foreign missions, &c., as set forth in Mrs. Pardiggle and Mrs. Jellyby. The lecture was illustrated with appropriate recitations, ably given by Miss M. Russell Davies, Mr. W. F. Fowler, and Mr. Francis J. Gauntlett.

BRIXTON.—On March 25 a meeting was held in the Ladies' Parlour of Brixton Independent Church. Mr. R. J. Block occupied the chair. The programme mainly consisted of readings from Dickens by the Rev. A. Thurston Pain. These included selections from *David Copperfield*, Chapters 42 and 45, Part I., in narration of "Mischief," as caused by Uriah Heep, with regard to the domestic relations of Doctor Strong and his young wife, Annie; and Part II., the happy clearing-up of all misunderstanding, as promoted by the good offices of Mr. Dick. Mrs. Max Guy very pleasantly relieved the more serious interest of the evening by two interludes of music, rendering "The Venetian Song" and "Little Nell" with charming effect. After some remarks offered by Messrs. Block, Marriott, Baines, and Allbutt, Mr. Pain gave his concluding reading from *Nicholas Nickleby*, "The Five Sisters of York," the beauty and pathos of which were much appreciated both by reader and audience. On April 8, at the same place, the arrangements were in the hands of Miss Kathleen Marriott, who is to be congratulated on having provided an unusually interesting programme. The recitals from Dickens were given by Mr. Howard Rose ("Dick Swiveller" and "A Wild Night at Sea), Mr. Douglas ("Harold Skimpole" and "The Wreck," from *David Copperfield*), and Miss K. Marriott (Mrs. Jellyby's Housekeeping), all of which were far above the average. Indeed, we doubt if Mr. Douglas's "Harold Skimpole" could be surpassed, so finished and perfect was his realization of the character. The rest of the programme comprised songs and instrumental music, contributed by Mesdames Cobeldick, A. and E. Sherlock, Messrs. G. Brown, W. P. Smith, and G. Boden. Mrs. and Miss Joseph, members of the Melbourne Branch, on a visit to London, were present during the evening. Miss Joseph favoured the company with a recitation. Mr. B. W. Matz occupied the chair.

FOREST GATE.—A highly successful meeting at Earlham Hall, on April 11, brought the session to a close. Mr. John Tosceni gave a miscellaneous recital of six items, which included "The Goblins who Stole a Sexton," from *Pickwick;* and "Miggs and the 'Prentice Knight," from *Barnaby Rudge,* the audience insisting on an encore to this latter item. The elocutionist's greatest success, however, was his rendering of Richard Marsh's "For One Night Only," in which the unfortunate countryman's heartrending experiences as a waiter were told with great effect, and created roars of laughter. The following artistes supplied vocal and instrumental music between the recitals: Miss Edna Freeman, Miss Victoria Cox, Mr. Aubrey Ford, and Mr. L. V. Rockley. Madame Lena Michelbacher and Miss Rosa Bonner were the accompanists, and Mr. Ernest Gray, L.C.C., presided.

GLOUCESTER.—At the March meeting Miss Hadwen and Mr. Juckes gave capital recitations from Dickens, the former giving the account of the Eatanswill Election, and Mr. Juckes Pickwick's story of the little Parish Clerk. There followed an interesting talk *apropos* the selections, and the proceedings proved most interesting and instructive. The Rev. Walter Lloyd took the chair in the regretted absence of Mr. H. W. Bruton.

HASTINGS AND ST. LEONARDS.—A very successful "social" was held at the Queen's Hotel on Wednesday, April 3. Major Vipan, D.S.O. (vice-president) presided over a very large company, who spent the greater part of the evening in progressive whist, which was keenly enjoyed. Refreshments were handed round, and a short vocal programme was contributed to by Madame Amy Atkins, Mrs. W. W. Hoad, Mr. W. H. Eldridge, and Mr. George Day.

HULL.—The members of the Branch had for consideration at their March meeting *A Tale of Two Cities.* Mr. T. H. Leahair introduced the subject, and gave a thoughtful account of the various phases of the book, making the stirring times of the Revolution live again in the memory. Illustrative readings were given by Miss A. Hall, Miss Blanche Watson, and Mr. Holgate Ellison. The vocalist for the evening was Mrs. George Graves, and Miss G. Watson, L.R.A.M., ably accompanied.

LIVERPOOL.—A meeting was held in the Common Hall, Hackins Hey, on March 27. The first business was the passing in solemn silence of a vote of sympathy to the widow and family of Mr. Jas. Marriott, one of the most enthusiastic members, and a member of the Council, whose recent death we regret to record. Feeling allusions to the estimable qualities of the deceased gentlemen were made by Mr. C. P. Mitchell, Hon. Secretary, and Mr. J. R. Ramsden. The President, Mr. E. A. Browne, who occupied the chair, then gave some highly entertaining remarks on "Charles Dickens and Music," in which he stated that the famous novelist, though not musically inclined, yet apportioned the singing of many popular songs to some of his characters. At various points of the address Miss Hodgson and Dr. Hamilton sang several of the songs alluded to, viz., "Begone, dull care," "The Ivy Green," "The Dashing White Sergeant," and others. The Council and members of the Branch gave their closing treat of the present session to over 220 Southend slum children attending the Workmen's Mission, Upper Mann Street, at Prince's Gate Baptist Church Hall. Tea was partaken of with evident relish by the youngsters, the arrangements being admirably organized and carried out by that energetic and charitable lady, Mrs. E. H. Bell, assisted by a large staff of willing workers. During the evening a programme of musical items, recitations, &c., was rendered by various friends.

LEEDS.—On March 21 Mr. G. F. Furniss read a paper on "A Study of a Humbug," dealing with Pecksniff. Mr. Furniss followed Mr. Pecksniff through all the mazes of his marvellous posing, and presented him as one of the cleverest characters Dickens ever drew. On March 20 the Fellowship gave a tea and entertainment to 200 slum children selected from the Council schools of the poor districts. Nearly 100 dolls were presented to the same number of little mothers. Mr. A. R. Turner, with his usual kindness, entertained the children, and his efforts in this direction were supplemented by Mr. Kitchen, who told them stories. A social evening was held at the Grand Central Hotel on April 5.

MANCHESTER.—On April 5 Mr. Albert Nicholson presided over the annual meeting, at the Portico Library, Manchester. It was reported that sixty-nine new members had joined the society during the year, and that the present membership was 190. Sir William Bailey was re-elected President, and Mr. Arthur Humphreys and Mr. F. Holden were respectively appointed to the positions of Hon. Treasurer and Hon. Secretary. Subsequently, Mr. J. Ambler made a statement respecting the aims and objects of the newly formed Civic Guild of Help, which were such, he said, as should especially appeal to lovers of Dickens. He suggested that the members of the Fellowship should give practical assistance to the new organization, whose desire it was to discriminate between the idle and the deserving poor, and help the latter in divers ways to tide over a period of distress. A resolution expressing sympathy with the Guild was unanimously passed.

MELBOURNE.—A very successful meeting was held on March 4. A "Copperfield" evening had been arranged, and the following excellent programme was presented. Three papers by Mr. Fred Scrivenor, Miss Bate, and Mr. Frank Scrivenor on "The Book and its Story," "Micawber," and "Steerforth." Readings by Miss Windas and Godwin-Smith, "Rosa Dartle" and "Dora." Mr. Sullivan, a visitor from a country town, at the request of the president delivered an interesting and humorous address testifying to the life-long pleasure he had experienced through reading the works of Chas. Dickens. At the close of the meeting the Rev. Father Barry, a vice-president of the Victorian Association of Braille writers, on whose behalf the fellowship recently gave an entertainment, presented Mr. J. H. Crowther, the founder and hon. secretary of this branch, with a life governor's certificate of that association. There was as usual a very large attendance, and the president, the Rev. E. Rorke, B.A., occupied the chair. The membership still increases steadily, there now being 227 names on the roll.

NOTTINGHAM.—The Rev. Rosslyn Bruce delivered an interesting lecture on March 18. Councillor J. T. Spalding, J.P., presided. Mr. Bruce took for his subject "Dickens as a Reformer." He pointed out that the novelist not only showed his Christianity and right living in his books, but also in his speeches. In the latter—like Gladstone—Dickens was fond of bringing his peroration to an end by an eloquent appeal to the Deity, and this he did in a perfectly genuine spirit. We wanted more men like Dickens in these days to sweep away the same evils of our Poor Law system, as was seen lately in West Ham. The lecturer also referred to the love of Dickens for the little, down-trodden "slavey" and his passion for reform which he possessed in common with Carlyle.

PHILADELPHIA.—The Branch met on the evening of March 13 at the St. James's Hotel. About 100 members and guests were present, and were presided over by Mr. J. C. Eckel. Dr. Henry Leffmann, in a paper entitled "Dickens's Doctors," maintained that doctors in the

pages of Dickens were uniformly either negative and unimportant characters or of a generally despicable character. Dickens's acquaintance with physicians dated for the most part, Dr. Leffmann said, from his earlier years, when he came in contact with the ignorant type about prisons and almshouses. Moreover, the speaker held, the life of the physician does not lend itself readily to the medium of romance. In the discussion Dr. Matthew Wood was inclined to doubt this view, and sustained his side of the case by examples of live, forceful physicians in literature, amongst which were Allan Woodcourt. Mr. W. H. Hart gave pleasure with a paper entitled "Dickens as the World's Author." Miss Wager-Smith read in laughable style the "Party of Fanny Squeers"; and Sam Weller and his father seemed actually present when Mr. J. K. Thompson read of their meeting after a two years' separation. This was the first regular meeting of the Branch, and the general opinion was that a successful society is beginning to develop.

SHEFFIELD.—A social monthly meeting of the Branch was held at the Cutlers' Hall on March 22. Mr. R. W. Dodsworth occupied the chair. Miss Lily Chapman sang "Abide with me," and the Misses Doris and Kathleen Hydes gave with good effect a scene from "The School for Scandal." Mr. W. H. Williams recited "Kissing Cup's Race." Miss Helen Roberts read an instructive and interesting paper on "The Friendships of Dickens." The humorous element was in the capable hands of Messrs. Archie Waite and Sydney D. Gent, the former giving a miscellaneous recital in broad Yorkshire dialect, the latter reciting "A Model Sermon." The meeting terminated with an extempore address on Dickens and his teachings by Mr. J. G. Hydes.

TORONTO.—When Mr. Frank Speaight, of London, visited Canada last year, and gave a recital of *David Copperfield* for this Branch, he aroused enthusiasm, and made many warm friends and admirers. His return visit on February 22 proved equally successful. Mr. Speaight on this occasion presented a miscellaneous programme, which was highly appreciated, particularly his Dickens selections. Mr. E. S. Williamson, President of the Branch, acted as chairman, and gave Mr. Speaight a cordial introduction. The recital hall of the Conservatory of Music having been found too small for our monthly meetings—as the Branch now has a membership of over 350—the March meeting was held at the Gerhard Heintzman Hall. It proved one of the most successful and interesting meetings of the year. Vice-President J. W. Bengough occupied the chair. The principal feature of the programme was an address by the Rev. W. H. Hincks on the "Influences of *Oliver Twist*," this particular book being the subject of the evening. Miss Maud Olmstead contributed two vocal numbers, Mr. G. E. Buchanan read a synopsis of the story, Miss Malcolm read "Mr. Bumble before and after Marriage," and Mr. W. A. Sherwood spoke briefly. It was announced that the Branch would present, on May 9 and 10, an original dramatization by Mr. Bengough of the famous breach of promise trial, Bardell *v.* Pickwick.

WEST LONDON.—The March meeting of the branch was held in the Lecture Hall, Municipal Buildings, Ealing, on the 22nd. Mr. Jacobs presided. Mr. Graves gave the humorous sketch of the "Loving Couple," from *Sketches by Boz*. Mr. Gilbert Lean charmed everybody by his excellent rendering of *Dr. Marigold*. Miss Jeffcoat recited "Ruth with John Westlock," from *Martin Chuzzlewit;* and Mr. Leicester Romayne read one of his own papers on the "Childhood of David Copperfield," vindicating the characters from the criticism of unreality. The concluding meeting of the session took the form of a social evening, at the same hall, on April 5. The programme comprised songs, recitations, and instrumental music, and an enjoyable evening was spent, those con-

tributing towards the musical entertainment being Mesdames Vingoe, Nora Chorsley-Thomas, Watson Higginson, Gudgeon, Popham, Humphreys, and Hughes. Mrs. Cherob presided at the piano, and Mrs. Wolfe recited. Messrs. Romayne and Groves also sang, and Captain Higginson occupied the chair.

YORK.—"The Legal Characters of Charles Dickens" was the title of an admirably prepared paper given by Councillor J. B. Inglis, before a meeting in the Peckitt Street Schoolroom, last month, in the course of which he said books of the novelist that might be brought within the category of legal characters were very numerous, amounting to over fifty. They had lawyers, judges, magistrates, notaries, law writers, sheriff's officers, law stationers, and that Charles Dickens did not hold a high opinion of law and lawyers, and, with one or two exceptions, his legal creations could not, by the greatest stretch of imagination, be considered examples of probity or fair samples of men. What he saw during the eighteen months he was in a lawyer's office fixed upon his mind many strange characters, and gave him the ideas which were so graphically and powerfully brought before his readers in his works. In conclusion, the speaker said if Charles Dickens had been somewhat harsh with his lawyers, and if he had caricatured them in some cases with a touch of bitterness, his object had been to warn, to reproach, to advise, and those lessons were equally applicable to all, whatever profession they followed, or in whatever station they might be placed.

READING.—On April 9 Mr. B. W. Matz, Chairman of the Council of the Dickens Fellowship, gave a lecture at the Y.M.C.A. Hall, Reading, under the auspices of the Reading Literary and Scientific Society, to a large audience. The title of the lecture was "Scenes and Places in the Life and Writings of Dickens." Mr. Matz dealt chiefly with Dickens-Land, illustrating his remarks with an excellent series of lantern views. After briefly recounting the always interesting story of the novelist's life, and exhibiting pictures of his London homes, the lecturer took his audience on a tour through Dickensian London and Rochester. Of course, only the more important spots were visited, Dickens-Land being far too extensive a territory to be covered thoroughly in the space of an hour and a half, but the jaunt was an extremely enjoyable one, and Mr. Matz proved an admirable guide, illustrating his remarks with many apt quotations from Dickens's books. The views that were shown on the screen were deeply interesting, and special interest attached to several views of vanished Dickens landmarks. Finally a series of the best-known portraits of Dickens was shown, and this was especially appreciated. Mr. Matz, who briefly referred to Dickens's visits to Reading, was heartily thanked for his lecture.

MR. S. LANGTON JOHNSON'S DICKENS RECITAL.—On April 10, Mr. S. Langton Johnson, a well-known impersonator, gave a capable rendering of character sketches from Dickens to a crowded and enthusiastic audience at the Parish Hall, South Acton. These included Uriah Heep, in which he was ably assisted by Master R. Carey Watson as David Copperfield; the old Grandfather, assisted by Miss Kathleen Wood as Little Nell; Dick Swiveller, assisted by Miss Vere Ivanoff; Rogue Riderhood; and Dan'l Peggotty. Mr. Johnson also presented three scenes from *A Tale of Two Cities*, in which he excelled himself as Sidney Carton. He was assisted in these by Mr. A. Goldschmidt Watson as Charles Darney, by Miss Florence Watson as Lucy Manette, and by Miss Vera Ivanoff as the Little Seamstress. In the second half of the programme Mr. Johnson gave Wilkins Micawber, Barnaby Rudge, Bill Sikes (as-

sisted by Miss Vera Ivanoff as Nancy), Mrs. Gamp, and Fagin. Throughout his *répertoire* Mr. Johnson showed great ability in presenting the various phases of the novelist's genius, and seemed equally at home in humour, pathos, and tragedy. Incidental music was supplied by Mr. Alfred Hanson.

DICKENSIANA MONTH BY MONTH

BOOKS

Martin Chuzzlewit. Two volumes in the "National" Edition. 21*s.* net. (Sold in sets only.) London: Chapman & Hall, Ltd.

Great Expectations; and *Oliver Twist.* In the "Popular" Edition. 1*s.* net, cloth; 2*s.* net, leather. London: Chapman & Hall, Ltd.

The Eatanswill Gazette. Published occasionally. Nos. 1 and 2. 3*d.* *Eatanswill Gazette* Office, Sudbury, Suffolk.

MAGAZINE AND NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

"Cheeryble House" (illus.). *Illustrated London News,* March 16; *The Graphic* (by J. Ashby Sterry), March 23.

"Eatanswill and Sudbury." *Morning Leader,* March 27; *Daily News,* March 26, April 3, 4, and 5; by Judge Willis, *Daily News,* April 9.

"Which is Eatanswill?" By Percy Fitzgerald. *Daily News,* March 28.

"Our 100 Picture Gallery: Through Dickens-Land" (illus.). *Strand Magazine,* April.

"A Dickens Landmark: Mrs. Maylie's House at Chertsey for Sale." *Tribune,* April 5; and other papers.

"Dickens and the People." *Derby Telegraph,* April 3.

"Maclise's Portrait of Dickens" (coloured plate). *Graphic,* April 6.

"A Dickens Letter." *Oswestry Advertiser,* March 27; and *Daily Chronicle,* April 2.

"Dickens and Thackeray." By Joseph Hocking. *Chiswick Times,* March 22.

"Did Dickens meet the 'Cheeryble' Brothers?" *T.P.'s Weekly,* April 5.

"Dickens Coincidence" ("Office Window") *Daily Chronicle,* April 3.

"Mistakes made by Dickens." *Bazaar,* March 22.

"The Women of Dickens." *Notts Express,* March 21.

"Links with the Past" (Pycroft House, illus.). *Lloyd's Weekly,* April 14.

"An Early Estimate of Dickens." By J. W. T. L. *T.P.'s Weekly,* April 19.

"One of Dickens's Exponents: George Cattermole." By Louis Cecil. *The Crown,* April 20.

DIARY OF DICKENS MEETINGS

MAY

3. Sheffield Branch: Smoking Concert at Royal Victoria Station Hotel, at 7.30.
6. Brixton Branch: Conversazione in Lecture Hall, Brixton Independent Church, at 8.
9. Chesterfield Branch: Social Evening, at Trinity Institute, at 8.
9. Toronto Branch: Performance of "Bardell *v.* Pickwick."
10. Winnipeg Branch: Discussion, *Oliver Twist.*
24. Shrewsbury Branch: Children's Outing.
25. Brighton Branch: Evening arranged by lady members, at Steine House, at 8.
29. Hastings Branch: Lecture on Dickens by Mr. G. K. Chesterton at Queen's Hotel, at 8.

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From an engraving by J. C. Armitage, after a photograph by Gurney, taken in America, 1868